

**New Jersey Audubon  
NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Signature Program for Seniors  
Extension Program: Urban Stewardship at Hawk Rise Sanctuary**

Date of Final Report: August 15, 2013  
Project period – July 1, 2011 through August 31, 2013  
NEI Job Code: 0286-002  
Project Code: S-2011-033

HEP funds received - \$14,552

**OVERVIEW**

NJ Audubon completed the original work related to the Signature Program for Seniors and was given permission to use the remaining funds toward a project related to Hawk Rise Sanctuary in Linden, NJ.

**GOALS**

**Signature Program for Seniors:**

The overall goal of this program was to raise awareness about the natural history of the estuary and its associated environmental issues among senior citizens. NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Signature Program for Seniors provided safe and meaningful social, recreational, educational and service opportunities for active adults aged 60 and over. NJ Audubon used this program to help promote an informed and educated constituency about the ecological health of the Harbor and its living resources.

**Urban Stewardship at Hawk Rise Sanctuary**

Hawk Rise Sanctuary is owned and operated by the City of Linden on the banks of the Rahway River. The sanctuary recently opened to the public and our goal as the stewardship and program partner is to educate City officials/workers and the public about the value and scope of stewardship as it pertains to a “wild” area as compared to an urban park.

**SUMMARY of PROJECTS - Signature Program for Seniors**

Over an 18-month period NJ Audubon met with hundreds of senior citizens at residential and day facilities to educate about the NY/NJ Harbor estuary and its resources. Presentations were developed to share the natural history as well as introduce program participants to the region’s environmental issues. Additionally, seniors were invited on several field trips to visit strategic sites within the region.

**COURSE OF ACTION**

In order to meet our goals, NJ Audubon focused our planning on four overarching task areas.

- 1) Plan and conduct various natural history experiences in a variety of settings.

- 2) Provide a setting in which to learn about and discuss environmental issues.
- 3) Create and implement projects where participants are civically engaged.
- 4) Encourage seniors to become involved in volunteer programs.

Our staff began the project by identifying appropriate seniors facilities to contact. We worked with seven facilities altogether with five of these in low-income ethnically diversified communities. PowerPoint presentations were modified/developed to highlight our message about resource diversity, natural history and environmental issues. In addition to site programs we scheduled two field trips for the residents.

### **Accomplishments**

A series of programs were given to Seabrook Village in Tinton Falls, Alice V. Tomaso in Middle town, the Atrium on Navesink Harbor in Red Bank, PTAK in Highlands, Portland Point in Atlantic Highlands, Croydon Hall in Middletown and Wesleyan Arms in Red Bank. These programs included: *the Nature of New Jersey*, *the Nature of Sandy Hook and Colonial Waterbirds*, *Our Coastal Gems* and a new program: *Raritan Bay and Estuary, a Journey*. The latter included contributions of images and information from the American Littoral Society, the NY/NJ Baykeeper and the Raritan Riverkeeper focused on the history, usage, economy, environmental issues, endangered species, and the future of the Raritan Bay and Estuary as well as the importance of this region to the area's residents. Since we wanted to have repeated contact with the seniors, each of these programs was presented at each facility. Post program discussion occurred and all programs were well received by the residents as well as the senior center's director/program director. All programs were offered during the day with one exception, *the Atrium on the Navesink* in Red Bank where programs were in the evening. Here interested residents often continued the conversation for almost an hour following every presentation.

Field trips provide seniors with direct experience with the estuary and surrounding environs. One trip was a bus tour that visited important wetland habitats on the Raritan Bayshore from Belford east and including the Sandy Hook unit of Gateway National Recreation Area with discussions regarding the fishing industry, shellfish beds, endangered species, wildlife and what the future will hold for this region with regard to all these issues and the possibilities of future flooding as a result of global warming. The other was a boat tour which enabled us to schedule a field trip on the Navesink River with discussions of endangered species, resident wildlife, the environment and future issues of high water and the impact of global warming.

We have met with approximately 600 senior citizens; program evaluations were submitted to each facility's director/program director. Responses indicated that the programs were suitable and relevant to the residents and that they provided residents with a balance between learning about natural history as well as environmental issues. Comments included: "Programs were extremely educational," "[Residents] requested more such presentations." and from one director, "Grants are so important to us as HUD budgets have been substantially cut."

### **Project evaluation**

Our metrics for success included: number of educational presentations given, number of field trips taken; number of attendees; anecdotal comments from attendees and senior citizen group organizers

Number of presentations - 27

Number of field trips -2

Number of program participants – 600

Comments (attached survey and letter of thanks)

### **Lessons learned**

Our intent with this program was to raise awareness of the habitats of the Raritan River, estuary and bay and the environmental issues related to this region. We thought that the senior citizens in these communities would be more proactive on behalf of the environment, by supporting legislation or writing letters to local/state officials. We did not see or hear about these kinds of actions being taken on a broad scale but all participants increased their knowledge/understanding of the region in which they lived and for at least one participant, the field trip was transformational when she said, "This was one of the best experiences of my life and I am going to tell my friends what they missed."

### **Pictures (attached)**

- 1) Program participants on a field trip on the Navesink River
- 2) Program participants during question/answer time at a center

All photos by Pete Bacinski; authorization given.

### **Materials produced**

4 PowerPoint presentations

### **Other Materials (attached)**

1. Survey
2. Letter of Thanks

## **SUMMARY of PROJECTS – Urban Stewardship at Hawk Rise Sanctuary**

Over a period of three months (June – August 2013) NJ Audubon staff worked with City of Linden employees and the public to raise awareness about invasive species and urban stewardship.

### **COURSE OF ACTION**

In order to meet our goal, NJ Audubon focused our efforts in the following areas:

- 1) Develop site specific presentation materials to teach about stewardship, wildlife monitoring and invasive species.

- 2) Conduct professional training for the City of Linden's Parks department personnel about site maintenance and stewardship.
- 3) Conduct programs for the public about invasive species and wildlife habitat.
- 4) Begin invasive species removal and plant protection at the site.

### **Accomplishments**

NJ Audubon staff conducted an expanded Invasive Species Management Workshop on July 18 to Linden Facilities staff. The training consisted of a classroom session followed by a field visit to the Hawk Rise Sanctuary site. Participants learned about the Hawk Rise Sanctuary project and vision for stewardship through a PowerPoint presentation. In the course of this seminar we discussed invasive plant management strategies and provided an Invasive Species Guide as a tool to assist in the identification and management of non-native invasive plants. Additionally they learned about the wildlife monitoring (objectives, methods and preliminary results) occurring at the Sanctuary to better understand the site's biodiversity – especially bird populations.

Two volunteer Invasive Species Removal days were held in August. These public events were designed to encourage local residents/volunteer groups to join NJ Audubon staff at the site and learn about the natural history as well as take action to help remove invasive plants and protect existing native plants. During the first event we had volunteers from Girl Scout Troop 40176. During the event we identified Japanese knotweed, phragmites, and Japanese stiltgrass and then used tools to hand remove a section about 6 feet wide and 100 feet long adjacent to the boardwalk. The material was bagged and Linden's DPW removed it to regular garbage. During the second event, volunteers from the same Girl Scout Troop returned and there were also volunteers from the St. Vincent's Boy Scouts troop in Linden/Clark. We reviewed invasive identification and cleared an area of about 500 sq feet of knotweed, phragmites, Japanese stiltgrass, mugwort, thistle, mile-a-minute and others. We also put chicken wire around about 50 restoration plants to protect them from deer browse.

Both of these actions, while small in comparison to what needs to be accomplished at Hawk Rise Sanctuary, have set the stage for future engagement. As a consequence, two additional actions will result: 1) With feedback from the City's facility staff NJ Audubon will be in a better position to create and tailor a manageable stewardship plan for the site, and 2) Increased awareness of invasive species as a stewardship challenge has resulted in securing additional funds to erect a deer fence around approximately 4 acres of woodland; this structure (to be erected in fall/winter 2013) will provide protection for a small part of the sanctuary and enable additional targeted invasive species removal and education.

### **Project Evaluation**

Our metrics for success included number of presentations/events, number of volunteers/employees engaged, number of NJ Audubon employees from different departments engaged, the amount of invasive species removed, and number of native plants protected from deer browse.

- Number of volunteers engaged – 15 adults, 15 children
- Number of city employees engaged – 4 for the presentation; 10 for general information to City Council
- Number of NJ Audubon employees – 5 representing stewardship, research and education
- Number of presentations/programs – 3 for a total of 9 hours
- Plants protected with chicken wire- 50
- Amount of invasive species removed – 1100 square feet

**Lessons learned:** Because of the timing of this project (over the summer) our attendance at the invasive species removal events was lower than anticipated even with fliers and local advertisements. We would look to be more strategic in planning these events in the future to a time when youth groups (scouts) are meeting more regularly and/or we could incorporate college students or other youth groups/clubs.

**Pictures:** (attached)

- 1) Bags of invasive species to be removed at Hawk Rise Sanctuary
  - 2) Overview of Hawk Rise Sanctuary with closed Linden Landfill in background
- Photos were taken by NJ Audubon staff member – Kelly Wenzel, authorization given.

**Materials Produced**

1. PowerPoint – Bird Monitoring at Hawk Rise Sanctuary
2. Volunteer Events poster (attached)







### New Jersey at the Crossroads of Migration

**Take Action!**  
Habitat is the place where an organism lives, permanently or temporarily, which provides the things needed for that organism's survival.

Food, water, and shelter are necessary elements of an animal's habitat.

Here's what you can do:

- Create a backyard habitat that supports bird migration.
- Support conservation organizations working to preserve habitats.
- Work with organizations and your town to preserve open space.
- Support legislation that focuses on species biodiversity.



Migrating birds stop over here to take the Atlantic Ocean, mountain ranges and corridors to help guide them. Birds stopping grounds to enhance genetic diversity. Birds also use riparian areas (rivers, lakes, and streams) as well as the highly migratory birds to help them migrate from one place to place. Birds arrive to the Atlantic Ocean.

The Atlantic Flyway runs from the Arctic to the Caribbean and is defined by the Appalachian Mountains to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. New Jersey's location, midway between the receptor and the source, dramatically places it where many populations of organisms are found.

#### Migration and the Seasons

Every season has its different kind of migrants.

Spring your list. Fall. Winter and back. Perhaps you will be able to spot them!



**Snowy Plover**  
Migrates from southern and central states. Common in the spring and fall migration.



**House Finch**  
Migrates from the north and south. Common in the spring and fall migration.



**Red-winged Blackbird**  
Migrates from the north and south. Common in the spring and fall migration.



**Hawk**  
Migrates from the north and south. Common in the spring and fall migration.

#### What is Migration?

Migration is a seasonal movement of an animal from one location and climate to another location and climate.

Usually these movements are tied to resource availability, seasonal changes and reproduction.

While many animals migrate, birds are often the most obvious because they are easy to see.





# Hawk Rise Sanctuary

## Volunteer Projects



**Sunday, July 28**  
**9am to Noon**

We will identify and remove common invasive plants found in the sanctuary and all around NJ.

**Saturday, August 3**  
**9am to Noon**

We will protect our precious restoration plants from White-tailed deer by installing wire fences around plants.

Join New Jersey Audubon at **Hawk Rise Sanctuary** and help take care of this valuable natural resource.

**Register for one or both projects.**

Ages 8 and up welcome.

Tools and gloves provided; bring water.

Hawk Rise is located on Range Road in Linden, NJ

**Please call or email Kelly Wenzel, Project Coordinator to register.**

**Phone: 908.766.5787 Ext. 41**

**Email: [kelly.wenzel@njaudubon.org](mailto:kelly.wenzel@njaudubon.org)**

**Web: <http://www.njaudubon.org/SectionHawkRiseSanctuary/Introduction.aspx>**

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